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Chair: Ms. King ..... (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines)
Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

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Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Thomson** (President of the General Assembly) said that, given the scale of the challenges facing the United Nations, the Fifth Committee's work was essential in ensuring that adequate resources and administrative frameworks were in place when the Secretary-General designate took office in January 2017. The Committee had considerable influence in the Organization, since its decisions defined Member States' financial responsibilities, affected thousands of staff and shaped the United Nations response to challenges in peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. It would play a significant role in enabling the Organization to support the implementation by Member States of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to which he gave the highest priority. It had special responsibility for ensuring that the United Nations was fit for purpose and performed to the high standards expected.

2. The late availability of documents had made the Committee's heavy workload even more challenging. To address the situation, his Office had been urging the relevant parties to work faster. Long-term solutions were required to address the root causes of the systematic delays, but he appealed to all involved to make every effort to bring the work of the Committee to a timely conclusion. The limited time remaining would be sufficient for that purpose if delegations focused on working together in the best interests of the United Nations and reaching agreements by consensus. Committee members understood that administrative and budgetary provisions must be put in place in a timely fashion for the Organization to function. Fortunately, as diplomats, they had an aptitude for forging agreements.

Agenda item 134: Programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (*continued*)

Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (*continued*) (A/71/365 and A/71/595)

Thematic cluster I: special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General (*continued*)

Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen; Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi (A/71/365/Add.6 and A/71/595/Add.6)

Thematic cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and commissions (*continued*)

United Nations Mission in Colombia (A/71/365/Add.7, A/71/365/Add.7/Corr.1 and A/71/595/Add.7)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.23: New Urban Agenda (A/71/687; A/C.5/71/15)

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.26: Oceans and the law of the sea (A/71/686; A/C.5/71/16)

Revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions and twenty-fourth special session (A/71/623 and A/71/688)

Contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/71/691; A/C.5/71/17)

First performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/576 and A/71/680)

3. **Mr. Huisman** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the Secretary-General's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/71/365), said that the budget proposals for the 31 missions contained in the report amounted to $578 million, including the share of the missions in the budget of the Regional Service Centre in Entebbe, Uganda, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/289. After the preparation of the report, the mandate of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar had not been renewed, and the requirements of the remaining missions would therefore amount to $577 million. For those missions, 3,704 civilian positions were proposed for 2017, an increase of 86 positions, mainly in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). As in previous years, the proposals were organized in three thematic clusters, while the budgets

for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) were presented in separate addenda. Cluster I included special and personal envoys and special advisers of the Secretary-General, cluster II included sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, and cluster III included political offices, peacebuilding support offices and integrated offices. For 2017, the proposals for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism and the United Nations Mission in Colombia were presented in separate addenda.

4. In response to comments from the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, the Secretariat had improved the presentation of budgets for special political missions. The report included information regarding compliance with the 16-day advance travel booking policy and the provision of free support by the host country. The General Assembly was requested to approve the budgets for the 30 missions in the total amount of $576.6 million for 2017, including the share in the budget of the Regional Service Centre; approve a charge of $548.5 million corresponding to the balance remaining in the provision for special political missions for the biennium 2016-2017; appropriate an additional $28.3 million under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for 2016-2017, taking into account the estimated overexpenditure of $0.2 million for 2016, funded through commitment authorities; and appropriate $1.7 million under section 36, Staff assessment, to be offset by a corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.

5. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on estimates under thematic cluster I for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi (A/71/365/Add.6), he said that, for the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen, resources of $15.5 million, an increase of $8.8 million compared to 2016, were required, and 74 new positions were proposed. The increase reflected the request in Security Council resolution 2216 (2015) for the Secretary-General to intensify his good offices role to enable the resumption of a peaceful, inclusive, orderly and Yemeni-led political transition, and the exchanges between the Secretary-General and the Security Council on support to the Yemeni parties and the peace process. For the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, $11.9 million was requested for 2017, $4.2 million more than in 2016, and 20 new positions were proposed. The increase reflected the request in Security Council resolution 2303 (2016) for the Secretary-General to strengthen the Office.

6. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on estimates under cluster III for the United Nations Mission in Colombia (A/71/365/Add.7 and A/71/365/Add.7/Corr.1), he said that the resources requested for 2017 amounted to $64.2 million for the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2261 (2016) and 2307 (2016), to provide 400 observers for the international component of the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism and 280 civilian positions, including 7 backstopping positions in New York.

7. Introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.23: New Urban Agenda (A/C.5/71/15), he said that additional resources of $770,500 would be required to implement the requests in paragraphs 172 and 173 of the annex to the draft resolution for an evidence-based independent assessment of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), a related report and a high-level meeting of the General Assembly.

8. Introducing the Secretary-General's statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.26: Oceans and the law of the sea (A/C.5/71/16), he said that additional resources of $748,100 would be required for 2017 to carry out the programme of work for the period 2017-2020 for the second cycle of the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. The additional resources would support the institutions of the Regular Process and the organization of regional workshops. Additional resources for mandated activities in 2018-2019 and 2020-2021 would be requested in the proposed programme budgets for those bienniums.

9. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions and twenty-fourth special session (A/71/623), he recalled that the General Assembly had decided, in its

resolutions 63/263 and 65/281, to consider, through the Committee, the financial implications of the resolutions and decisions in the annual reports of the Human Rights Council, including those emanating from the Council's September sessions. In 2016, the Council had adopted 73 resolutions and decisions with financial implications at the four sessions, compared to 57 in 2015. The estimated new requirements were $26.4 million, comprising $20.9 million for the biennium 2016-2017 and $5.5 million for the biennium 2018-2019.

10. Introducing the Secretary-General's report on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/C.5/71/17), he said that the statement was presented in line with the annex to General Assembly resolution 42/211. In resolutions 70/248 B, 70/248 C and 70/249, the Assembly had approved charges of $24.1 million against the contingency fund, leaving a balance of $17.6 million. The potential charges of $43.3 million included in the Secretary-General's report exceeded the remaining balance by $25.7 million. Taking into account the recommendations in the Advisory Committee's related report (A/71/691), the charges amounted to $42.9 million, which exceeded the remaining balance by $25.3 million and, despite the Secretariat's efforts, were too large to be absorbed within the approved resources for the biennium 2016-2017. As the programme budget no longer contained priority-setting information approved by Member States, alternative options for the reallocation of resources between high- and low-priority elements of mandated programmes or the reduction of resources, including the deferral, termination and curtailment of mandated activities, would require Assembly approval.

11. Introducing the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/576), prepared under the arrangements endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 32/211, he said that the primary purpose of the report was to identify the adjustments required at the end of the first year of the biennium because of variations between actual inflation and exchange rates, standard costs and vacancy rates and the assumptions used in the calculation of the initial appropriations. The report took into account the decisions of policymaking organs and unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. Under the expenditure sections, the revised estimates reflected an increase of $51.9 million compared with the appropriation approved by the General Assembly. The increase comprised $20.9 million for commitment authorities approved by the General Assembly to meet unforeseen and extraordinary expenses approved by the Advisory Committee and the Secretary-General, and $31.0 million related to recosting. The recosting adjustments reflected an increase of $59.6 million from changes in exchange rates, offset by gains of $11.9 million from forward purchasing in 2016. Variations between actual rates and the assumptions used for the initial appropriation had resulted in a decrease of $12.8 million for inflation, an increase of $30.3 million for standard costs and a decrease of $34.1 million for vacancy rates. The revised estimates under the income sections amounted to $533.1 million, an increase of $1.2 million compared to the initial estimate.

12. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the Advisory Committee's report on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/71/595), said that the Secretary-General had presented the resource requirements for each of the 31 special political missions in addenda to his report (A/71/365/Add.1, A/71/365/Add.2, A/71/365/Add.3, A/71/365/Add.4 and A/71/365/Add.5), and the Advisory Committee had accordingly made specific recommendations on those resources in addenda to its related report (A/71/595/Add.1, A/71/595/Add.2, A/71/595/Add.3, A/71/595/Add.4 and A/71/595/Add.5). The budget submissions for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, the United Nations Mission in Colombia and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism were presented in separate addenda to the Secretary-General's report (A/71/365/Add.6, A/71/365/Add.7, A/71/365/Add.7/Corr.1 and A/71/365/Add.8). The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the resources requested for the special political missions for 2017, subject to the observations and recommendations in the addenda to its report (A/71/595/Add.1, A/71/595/Add.2, A/71/595/Add.3, A/71/595/Add.4, A/71/595/Add.5, A/71/595/Add.6, A/71/595/Add.7 and A/71/595/Add.8).

13. The General Assembly had approved a biennial provision of $1,124.4 million for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017, and a total charge of $575.8 million for 36 missions in 2016, meaning that the undistributed balance of the provision

was $548.5 million. Taking into account the resources requested in addenda 6, 7, and 8 to the Secretary-General's report (A/71/365/Add.6, A/71/365/Add.7, A/71/365/Add.7/Corr.1 and A/71/365/Add.8), the total resource estimate for the missions for 2017 was $671.8 million, an increase of $97.6 million or 17 per cent compared with 2016. Following an enquiry by the Advisory Committee, the Secretariat had reduced the 2016 projected expenditure by $5.7 million because the headquarters of UNSMIL had not returned to Tripoli in 2016 as planned and the resource utilization rate of the Mission had therefore been low. The Advisory Committee was also informed that the resource estimates would be adjusted because the General Assembly would no longer need to consider the budget proposal for the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar. The Secretariat should provide the General Assembly with updated estimates during the Assembly's consideration of the matter.

14. The civilian staffing proposals for 2017 included the establishment of 119 additional positions for UNSMIL, 52 positions for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria and 18 positions for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, and reductions of 57 positions for UNAMA and 15 positions for UNAMI. The Secretary-General's report did not provide specific information regarding vacancy rates or posts that had been vacant for two years or longer. The Advisory Committee reiterated that justification for the retention or abolishment of such posts should be provided to the General Assembly. It made a number of cross-cutting observations on operational costs and discussed administrative issues related to the Kuwait Joint Support Office, which would be relevant to the Secretary-General's next report on the global service delivery model. The Secretary-General had presented the information on backstopping support to special political missions at Headquarters in a fragmented manner, with insufficient detail regarding the number of staff that provided such support, their distribution by office and function, and non-staff backstopping resources.

15. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on estimates under thematic cluster I for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi (A/71/595/Add.6), he said that the estimates for the missions had been presented separately to reflect recent developments on the ground and Security Council decisions. The Secretary-General proposed a significant increase of 74 positions in the Office of the Special Envoy for Yemen for 2017 and the continuation of the 39 positions authorized for 2016. The Advisory Committee welcomed the proposed relocation of the Special Envoy to Amman, but, taking into account the recruitment timelines for staff positions in the Office and the fact that the status-of-forces agreement with the Government of Jordan was pending, recommended a vacancy factor of 60 per cent for Professional positions established in 2017. It also recommended adjustments to the proposed staffing of the Security Sector Section, the residual capacity in New York and the mission support component. Despite the proposed significant increase of 20 positions in the Office of the Special Adviser on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, for 2017, and continuation of 33 positions from 2016, the Secretary-General stated in his report that the security situation in Burundi was precarious, the status-of-mission agreement had not been finalized and the deployment of personnel had been delayed. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended a vacancy factor of 70 per cent for new Professional positions. It recommended against the establishment of four additional support positions in New York, and also recommended adjustments to the proposals for the Dialogue Support Unit, the Security and Rule of Law Unit and the immediate staff of the Head of Office. It recommended that the General Assembly should appropriate just over $27 million for the missions for the biennium 2016-2017, taking into account the estimated overexpenditure for 2016.

16. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on estimates under cluster III for the United Nations Mission in Colombia (A/71/595/Add.7), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended against the establishment of 4 of the proposed 280 civilian positions, including 2 backstopping positions at Headquarters. Under operational costs, it recommended 10 per cent reductions under consultants and official travel. It recommended the approval of the other proposed resources for 2017 in the amount of $63,591,900. The report also contained information on the commitment authorities approved for 2016.

17. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.23: New Urban Agenda (A/71/687), he said that one General Service staff position was sufficient to support the high-level panel of experts appointed by the Secretary-General to conduct the assessment of UN-Habitat, and that the requirement for two consultants was not adequately explained. The requests for additional resources for consultants and contractual services were not justified because resources for consultants, experts and contractual services were

available in UN-Habitat. The Advisory Committee recommended that the resources for one General Service staff position should not be approved and that the remaining resources requested under section 15 of the programme budget should be reduced by 15 per cent, an amount of $60,300.

18. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/71/L.26: Oceans and the law of the sea (A/71/686), he said that under the draft resolution the Secretary-General would be requested to secure the necessary resources for the programme of work of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Whole on the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects, for the period 2017-2020. The draft resolution would result in additional charges against the contingency fund, including for two new temporary posts to strengthen the capacity of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea. The Advisory Committee recommended approval of the post of Programme Assistant, but, because two Professional posts had been approved in 2015 and two additional staff of the Division were providing assistance to help manage the Regular Process, it recommended against the post of Programme Officer.

19. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/680), he said that the revised estimates under the expenditure sections amounted to $5,460.7 million, an increase of 1.0 per cent over the appropriation approved by the General Assembly, while those under the income sections amounted to $533 million, an increase of 0.2 per cent over the initial estimates for the biennium. The Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the Secretary-General's revised estimates, subject to any adjustments resulting from the consideration of the matters before the Assembly.

20. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the revised estimates resulting from resolutions and decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council at its thirty-first, thirty-second and thirty-third sessions and twenty-fourth special session (A/71/688), he said that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of 10 of the 11 posts proposed by the Secretary-General, but the support needed for the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 33/30 could be provided by staff funded from general temporary assistance rather than through the establishment of the requested P-3 post. The annex to the Advisory Committee's report contained information regarding the proposed staffing requirements initially funded through commitment authorities. The Advisory Committee's recommendations on the 2016 requirements also applied to the related resources for 2017, where relevant.

21. Introducing the Advisory Committee's report on the contingency fund: consolidated statement of programme budget implications and revised estimates (A/71/691), he said that the contingency fund was essential in meeting additional expenditure resulting from programme budget implications or revised estimates. The total potential charges presented by the Secretary-General had not yet taken into account the Advisory Committee's recommendations on a number of issues; he trusted that the Secretariat would present the Assembly with an update before the end of the main part of its session.

22. **Ms. Wairatpanij** (Thailand), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the level of resources approved by the General Assembly must be commensurate with mandates to ensure their full and effective implementation. The Group attached great importance to the human rights pillar and the Human Rights Council. The additional resources required for the implementation of the resolutions and decisions adopted by the Council at its sessions in 2016 and its twenty-fourth special session in December 2015 were estimated at $49,385,000, of which $23,019,800 related to perennial, recurrent activities included in the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017. The remaining $26.3 million related to new requirements for the bienniums 2016-2017 and 2018-2019, including additional appropriations of $14.9 million to be charged against the contingency fund for the biennium 2016-2017. With regard to the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the Secretary-General's proposal for the establishment of 11 new P-5, P-4 and P-3 posts to support the activities mandated by the Council, sufficient resources should be provided for the implementation of such mandates.

23. The performance report was an essential benchmark of budget implementation. The budget process must be respected, and the Group opposed attempts to diverge from it through resolutions on the performance report and budget outline. It objected to piecemeal budgeting, which did not provide a coherent view of the whole, and to piecemeal budget reforms, and it opposed actions detrimental to the budget process. As stated in General Assembly resolutions, Member States must provide the Organization with adequate resources to implement mandates and were collectively responsible for ensuring that the budget process was respected, in accordance with resolutions

41/213, 42/211, 48/228 and others. No changes to the budget methodology, established budget procedures and practices, or the financial regulations could be implemented without General Assembly approval. The Group would follow with interest the results of the forward purchasing of foreign currency, which provided more certainty regarding the price of foreign currency to be purchased in future. Adequate regular budget resources should be provided for the implementation of mandates approved by the intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations.

24. **Mr. Fermín** (Dominican Republic), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that peace was one of the shared values of CELAC, which welcomed the signature by the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia — Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) of the revised Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, which had been many decades in the making and marked the end of the region's last armed conflict. The Community gave high priority to the United Nations Mission in Colombia, to which it had contributed unarmed observers responsible for monitoring and verifying the laying down of arms. The Committee must ensure that the Mission, which had a direct impact in the region, received the resources necessary to implement its mandate.

25. **Mr. Abdallah** (Chad), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group welcomed the progress of the inter-Burundian dialogue, led by the African Union and the East African Community in line with United Nations recognition of the need for partnership between regional and subregional actors and the international community in conflict prevention and mediation, and commended the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, for working with Burundian stakeholders to address the challenges facing the country. At the seventeenth extraordinary session of the Summit of Heads of State of the East African Community, held in September 2016, the recommendations in the report of the facilitator of the dialogue on the way forward had been endorsed and the need for regional leadership had been emphasized. The progress of the consultations held in line with the road map developed following the Summit had been positive.

26. The Group would seek information regarding the ways in which the 53 per cent increase in the resources requested by the Secretary-General for the Office of the Special Adviser for 2017, attributable mainly to staffing, official travel, facilities and infrastructure, and information technology, would help the Office fulfil its mandate to support the East African Community mediation team and to strengthen the rule of law and build confidence to foster an environment conducive to dialogue. Although the Secretary-General described the political situation in Burundi as precarious, the Heads of State of the East African Community and the facilitator had recently indicated that the political and security situation had improved. The increased security was an opportunity for stakeholders to conclude the process. In his proposal, the Secretary-General had not reflected those positive developments or recent updates from the East African Community to the effect that a political agreement would be signed by June 2017. The Secretary-General should adjust his proposal to take into account the situation on the ground and ensure that the scarce resources available were allocated as effectively as possible. Positions should be filled only when their functions could be realistically carried out and operationally supported.

27. The General Assembly, in its resolution 70/248 B, had noted that many United Nations entities were involved in conflict prevention and mediation in Africa and had requested the Secretary-General to establish synergies and efficiencies. The Group would seek information regarding the steps taken to improve the division of labour among regional actors, in particular the African Union and the East African Community. Under operational costs, the Group was concerned regarding the unjustified increases for official travel, consultants and information technology, and would seek details of each trip, the composition of the team, the role of each member and the cost elements. It would examine the details of each element under operational costs. The international community must support Burundian ownership of the East African Community-led process and allocate more resources to development programmes that benefited Burundians. The Group would seek information regarding the transfer of residual activities to the country team after June 2017. The United Nations must implement the mandate of the Office with strict impartiality and the highest level of professionalism. Its engagement was predicated on the full consent of the Government of Burundi, and the Group would seek to understand to what extent the Government and the subregional actors had consented to the Secretary-General's proposal.

28. **Ms. Adamson** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the

stabilization and association process country Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that the adoption in November 2016 of the revised Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP had confirmed her delegation's confidence in the peace process. The constructive spirit that had resulted in the Agreement must continue so that all Colombian political and social groups were actively engaged at such a historic moment. The challenges of implementing the Agreement must be met as a matter of priority. The United Nations Mission in Colombia, established by Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), was essential to the tripartite Monitoring and Verification Mechanism, the success of which would depend on national, regional and local coordination. In December 2016 the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the European Union and President Santos of Colombia had established the European Union Trust Fund for Colombia, part of a 600 million euro package to support post-conflict and peacebuilding efforts in the country in the form of technical assistance, grants and loans. Reconciliation and peacebuilding were difficult to achieve, and the European Union stood with the Colombian people as they opened a new page in their history. Her delegation was committed to its partnership with Colombia, including through its cooperation with the United Nations.

29. **Mr. Wax** (Israel) said that Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 was an outrageous and unprecedented instrument intended as a political tool to single out the State of Israel. The Council's disproportionate focus on Israel had contributed to the erosion of its legitimacy, a process that had culminated in its call for a de facto boycott of his country with the request for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to create a database of business enterprises, as outlined in paragraph 17 of the resolution, an act that recalled dark times in the history of Israel. Such a request fell outside the purview of the Human Rights Council and far exceeded the scope of the High Commissioner's mandate. His delegation would therefore reject the request for the allocation of regular budget funding for the implementation of resolution 31/36, owing to its discriminatory nature, and called on those Member States that had expressed objections to the creation of the database at the Council's thirty-first session to reject the proposal.

30. **Ms. Ndayishimiye** (Burundi) said that the Secretary-General's claim with regard to the precariousness of the political and security situation in her country was absurd. Citizens in Burundi went about their daily activities in peace, a testament to the improvement in the security situation. The normalization of that situation following the political upheaval of 2015 had been witnessed first-hand by the ambassadors based in Bujumbura and confirmed by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General for Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, during his last visit to the city. It had also been confirmed in the communiqués issued between 1 and 9 December 2016 by the former President of the United Republic of Tanzania and facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, Benjamin Mkapa, as well as in several other reports and communiqués issued by the East African Community, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

31. Her delegation feared that the alarmist slant of the report was a thinly veiled attempt to justify the creation of several unsuitable positions in Burundi, to be funded by Member State contributions. Political, economic and social challenges were still being resolved through inter-Burundian dialogue, which must involve men and women from within Burundi as well as the diaspora. Encouraging progress had been achieved in that regard thanks to the Ugandan mediation efforts facilitated by Mr. Mkapa, who, during a recent visit to Burundi that had included meetings with President Pierre Nkurunziza and other stakeholders, had urged Burundians to set aside the issue of the 2015 elections in order to focus on organizing democratic, free, transparent and peaceful elections in 2020.

32. She noted with regret that the report of the Secretary-General (A/71/365/Add.6), in alluding to key stakeholders who had not participated in the mediation dialogues, did not provide specific information with regard to their identity, and hoped that such stakeholders did not include the perpetrators of the coup of 13 May 2015 and their allies, who remained fugitives from justice. In addition, the report should have included clearer information with regard to the kind of technical and substantive support that had been provided to the mediation by the Office of the Special Advisor. The lack of references to assistance for the internal dialogue process suggested that the Office was focused exclusively on supporting the dialogue facilitated by Mr. Mkapa, despite the fact that the internal and external dialogues were vital, interconnected components of the inter-Burundian dialogue process.

33. The Government of Burundi was opposed to any expansion of the Office of the Special Advisor without

its prior consent, in line with the principle of respect for the sovereignty of Member States. Consequently, her delegation requested the Secretary-General to suspend all arrangements to increase the number of positions for the Office of the Special Advisor or to deploy Office personnel in the provinces of Gitega, Makamba and Ngozi, pending evaluation and approval by her Government.

34. Her Government would continue to work in an open and constructive spirit with the United Nations and its local operations in Bujumbura, including the Office of the Special Adviser, to strengthen peace and stability. The Burundian people would nevertheless oppose any interference in the country's internal affairs and would resist any pressure to accept decisions intended to serve indirect, outside interests. The Government of Burundi would therefore reject any initiative designed to implement Security Council 2303 (2016).

35. **Mr. Feldman** (Brazil) congratulated the Colombian people on the progress made with regard to the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace between the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP and welcomed the Security Council's decision to create a special political mission to serve as the international component of the tripartite monitoring mechanism. In line with its commitment to maintaining peace and regional stability, Brazil supported the efforts of Colombia to implement the Final Agreement, which was of historic significance for the region.

36. The United Nations Mission in Colombia must have the necessary resources to ensure the effective implementation of its mandate. His Government would contribute to the peace process in a tangible manner, including by participating in the activities of the Mission.

37. **Ms. Mejía Vélez** (Colombia) said that her delegation was grateful to the international community, in particular the United Nations, for its support for the peace process in Colombia; to the Security Council for approving the establishment of the United Nations Mission in Colombia; and to the States members of CELAC for contributing unarmed military observers to the Mission.

38. With the signing of the historic Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace on 24 November 2016, Colombia had entered a phase of renewed hope for the future that would be accompanied by new challenges, including national reconciliation and the implementation of the peace agreements, that must be met in order to achieve the stable and lasting peace that had eluded the country for more than 50 years. The tasks of monitoring and verifying the laying down of arms, as well as the bilateral and definitive ceasefire and the cessation of hostilities, were therefore critical. The Committee's support for the work plan of the Mission would be crucial in ensuring that it had the financial and human resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. Lastly, the unstinting support of the Organization and Member States would be essential to consolidating peace in the western hemisphere.

39. **Mr. Dalo** (Argentina) said that his country had supported the peace process in Colombia since its inception and welcomed the adoption by the Congress of Colombia of the final version of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace. The United Nations Mission in Colombia had been entrusted with critical oversight responsibilities in implementing the Final Agreement and the Agreement on the Bilateral and Definitive Ceasefire and the Cessation of Hostilities and the Laying Down of Arms. The Committee must therefore ensure that the Mission had the financial resources necessary to fulfil its mandate. In that regard, Argentina approved of the level of resources requested by the Secretary-General, including the budget proposal for 2017 and the appropriations sought for commitment authorities for 2016.

40. **Ms. Vásquez Islame** (Chile) said that, having participated as an accompanying country in the peace talks in Colombia, Chile would continue to collaborate with other actors committed to advancing the peace process. The work of the United Nations Mission in Colombia would remain a priority among its commitments to the region.

41. Efforts must be made to capitalize on the momentum generated by the recent parliamentary endorsement of the Final Agreement for the Termination of Conflict, which paved the way for the Mission to carry out its mandated responsibilities in pursuit of lasting peace. The Mission's work must be fully supported by the Organization. In particular, the Fifth Committee was responsible for ensuring that the Mission was provided with adequate financing in a predictable, flexible and efficient manner to enable the full implementation of its mandate. Lastly, she commended the Government of Colombia for guaranteeing its effective deployment and the CELAC member States for contributing observers and other human resources to the Mission.

42. **Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea** (Mexico) said that the achievement of peace in Colombia was of great significance for Latin America and the world, as it

gave the international community hope that solutions could be found to even the most protracted and complex conflicts. Mexico had supported the efforts of the people and Government of Colombia since the commencement of peace talks and was currently contributing observers to the United Nations Mission in Colombia as part of its efforts to gradually strengthen its participation in peacekeeping missions.

43. The Committee must fulfil its responsibility to ensure that the Mission was provided with adequate financing to deliver its ambitious mandate. Colombia deserved the full support of the Organization in its efforts to achieve lasting peace in the broadest possible sense. His delegation would seek further information regarding the Secretary-General's proposals and the related recommendations of the Advisory Committee with a view to ensuring that the Secretary-General had the necessary tools to carry out the Mission's work in 2017.

44. **Ms. Yánez Loza** (Ecuador) said that her delegation was committed to ensuring the efficient and timely conclusion of the Committee's work. Ecuador congratulated the Government and people of Colombia for putting an end to the oldest and only armed conflict in the region, thereby paving the way for stable and lasting peace, and underscored the need to ensure the timely and adequate provision of resources to support the peace process.

45. Ecuador was one of a small number of countries that had borne witness to the conflict in solidarity with Colombia. Ecuadorians therefore rejoiced at the announcement of a peace agreement, convinced that borders served not only to define limits but also to create spaces for strengthening ties and collaboration. She trusted that the achievement of peace in Colombia would further enhance its relations with Ecuador and the region.

46. In January 2016, at the fourth summit of CELAC, the Heads of State and Government of Latin America and the Caribbean had adopted Special Declaration No. 15 welcoming the expressed commitment of the Government of Colombia and FARC-EP to reach a final peace agreement and noting with satisfaction the adoption of Security Council resolution 2261 (2016), in which the Council had decided that CELAC member States would contribute observers to the United Nations Mission in Colombia. The Declaration was also reflected in the Political Declaration of Quito — Middle of the World, in which the Heads of State and Government of CELAC had reiterated their support for the completion of the dialogue process.

47. **Mr. Sherman** (United States of America), referring to the first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2016-2017 (A/71/576), said that he looked forward to discussing ways to develop a comprehensive solution to the issue of recosting, a perennial concern for his delegation.

48. **Mr. Shawesh** (State of Palestine) said that the unfounded objection expressed by the representative of the colonizing and occupying State of Israel to the implementation of Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 illustrated the conviction of Israel that it was above international law and the will of the international community and should not be held accountable for the innumerable crimes it committed. The resolution called for the creation of a list of companies that conducted business in the Israeli settlements established on Occupied Palestinian Territory, not the boycott of Israel, unless the representative believed that the settlements were an integral part of the State of Israel.

49. The international community must not allow any possibility for the continued existence of the settlements that could be exploited by Israel. Human Rights Council resolution 31/36 simply represented an attempt to faithfully apply the letter and spirit of international law, internationally binding resolutions and the advisory opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice on the Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, all of which rejected the illegal presence of the settlements. A list of Israeli and international companies that conducted business there illegally must be created with a view to cutting off the economic and social lifelines for the settlements. It should then be disseminated by Member States, which must immediately cease all business transactions with such companies and ensure that products from the settlements were not allowed to enter the markets in which they operated. States must also not allow settlers to enter their territories or to be members of their respective diplomatic corps.

50. The approximately 600,000 illegal settlers lived in entirely distinct conditions from the Palestinians under an undeclared but complete system of racial segregation. Even those States that supported Israel and provided it with unlimited military support and political cover for its violations of international law rejected the establishment of the settlements as an obstacle to the implementation of the two-State solution and the achievement of peace. Member States should therefore pay no heed to the words of the representative of Israel.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.